



Coast Guard Flag Voice 133

ENLISTED WOMEN'S AFLOAT ASSIGNMENT PLAN FOR S.P.E.A.R. 2001

On 8 November 2000, the Enlisted Personnel Management Division of the Coast Guard Personnel Command (CGPC-epm) completed a review and update of the 1997 Plan and published the Enlisted Women's Afloat Assignment Plan for S.P.E.A.R. 2001. The ultimate goal of these plans has been to fully integrate women into our cutter fleet, and thus every aspect of today's Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard's missions and unrestricted assignment policies are attractive to all members of the workforce. Maximizing opportunity for women, specifically aboard cutters, has been an ongoing process. In 1977 the first 14 women were assigned to one 378' WHEC. Since then, the opportunities for women to serve in ships has been expanded to over 50 cutters, including WAGBs, WHECs, 270' WMECs, WIXs, 180' and 225' WLBs, 175' WLMs, 110' WPBs, 87' CPBs, WTGB, and WLRs, located in ports throughout the country. The primary limiting factors to opening all ships to women has been the berthing configurations aboard the cutters and the overall number of qualified enlisted women in the Service.

The enlisted women who benefit most from the commissioning of the 225' WLBs, 175' WLMs and 87' CPBs are those serving in the MK, BM and FS ratings. However, the 225' WLBs also have billets for EMs, DCs, ETs, HSs, QMs, SKs and YNs, and the 175' WLMs provide billets for DCs, EMs, ETs, QMs and SKs. Each of these cutters provides a great deal of flexibility with regard to berthing options, therefore significantly increasing the afloat, independent duty, department head and command cadre opportunities for women.

The goals for the S.P.E.A.R. 2001 Enlisted Women's Afloat Assignment Plan are to:

a. Expand the number of cutters open to women.

- All 225' WLBs, 175' WLMs and 87' CPBs will be unrestricted for the assignment of women of the appropriate rate, pay grade and qualifications, including being assigned singularly to these cutters. Every effort will be made to assign additional women where only one is stationed; however, in no way will this restrict the assignment of a deserving petty officer. Nonrated women may also be assigned to these cutters. When nonrated women are to be assigned to a cutter and there are no women petty officers assigned, at least two female nonrates will be assigned.

b. Increase professional development opportunities for women.

- All 110' WPBs and 65' WYTLs will be unrestricted for the assignment of women chief petty officers to command cadre and department head billets.

- All 225' WLBs, 175' WLMs and 87' CPBs will be unrestricted for the assignment of female petty officers (E-5 and E-6) to command cadre, department head and independent duty billets.

c. Increase geographic diversity in assignments. The new classes of cutters are homeported in every District, with many being independently moored at locations throughout the United States; in and out of CONUS.

d. Continue to assign women to ships that already have women in their crews.

The challenge for the Service is to increase the number of women in our enlisted ranks, and to encourage women to pursue the seagoing ratings so they can take advantage of these expanded opportunities. Women can serve in leadership and independent duty positions in a wide variety of afloat platforms, missions and geographic areas. When the remaining new CPBs and WLBs are commissioned, nearly 85 cutters will be available for women. However, we do not currently have enough enlisted women in the right ratings to take full advantage of the Plan. At the end of FY00, we had 2,772 enlisted women on active duty, an increase of less than 200 since the end of FY96. One reason for this slow growth is that for the past two years, the recruiting focus has been to *fill the workforce* as rapidly as possible. Now that this has been accomplished, we need to work on improving the diversity of the workforce. Making improvements in the recruitment and *retention of women* is an essential duty of every leader in today's Coast Guard. It is vital to acquiring the workforce the Service will need in the future. Exposure to non-traditional ratings, especially through sea duty, provides an excellent means of educating our enlisted women on their career options. The flexibility provided by the new cutters, and that expected with the Integrated Deepwater System, provide significant increases in opportunities for women. Commands are encouraged to do everything possible to provide afloat and other non-traditional rating opportunities and/or experiences whenever possible. The Enlisted Women's Afloat Assignment Plan for S.P.E.A.R. 2001 charts an excellent course for the future of our Service.

Regards, FL Ames



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